

BioGrads Meeting Minutes

Friday, Mar 20th, 2009

Morag Coyne: Joining us for a presentation about Information Literacy

- Morag Coyne is the librarian for the Biology Department
- There are 5 librarians at Douglas, each responsible for a different department
- Morag liaises with Peter Boag (from Biology) and Linda Campbell (from Environmental Science)
- Librarians are doing a lot more teaching to help students develop skills related to accessing knowledge –this teaching is of increasing importance as more information is now available digitally and changes are occurring at a more rapid pace
- Morag is involved in a number of undergraduate courses (BIO 103, 111, 201 and 205)
- Her role is to teach students some of the basics of literature searching and referencing through both presentations and hands on assignments
- Graduate students can help by increasing awareness of Morag's role
- Would like to see more involvement by TAs to get the message out
- It was brought up that many of the new developments are also new to graduate students and TAs
- A couple of workshops would therefore be useful for grad students
- Morag will attempt to plan a workshop for Refworks in April

Chair (Martin):

- Constitutional amendments were discussed
 - We discussed the wording of the two new positions that we would like to add to the committee
 - QUBS Rep and Sports Rep
 - We also discussed the possibility of including a Grad Rep to the DSC
 - we need to contact current DSC before we go any further with this it will likely not be part of the upcoming April elections
 - We also discussed adding a clause to the Constitution which states that one person can't be nominated/run for more than one position
 - however, an individual could hold more than one position if some remain vacant
 - Final draft of amendments will be circulated among Biology graduate students ten days prior to voting

Faculty Rep (Matt):

- No news on budget cuts
- Biology department received \$35 000 to improve equipment in some classes: new computer screens were obtained for 302 and 303 labs, and a nitrogen generator was obtained for the 205 lab
- Faculty retreat will take place on April 16 in BioSci
- QGA is expected to go up (not official), but this won't lead to an increase in the stipend
- Recently, it was proposed that the 537 course be worth 2.5 credits (instead of 2), but it was decided that the course will remain at 2 credits

-It was discussed that the average time here for graduate students is 2.67 years for MSc and 4.67 for PhD

- in the interest of decreasing this average, there are plans to start asking students who have gone over time to leave (although it is unclear what this actually means)
- there is the potential for this to be of a concern to students and we want to prepare a statement that expresses our concerns and opinions

SGPS Reps (Ann and Catherine)

-2 points of importance

- Athletics fee was voted down, but quorum on this vote was not made
 - a petition was signed to contest this vote (700 signatures)
 - new vote will be held at the by-election on March 31st
 - major concern with the original turnout and vote is that there was a lot of confusion about the consequences of this vote
 - there are two possible outcomes if this is truly voted down:
 - 1) It is the same as voting down a renewal in which case the fee would be reset to zero and the Athletics center would have to reason to award any special rates to graduate students. This likely means that we would be charged Faculty fees to use the gym
 - 2) Fees would stay the same, but our access would be extremely limited
- we would like to improve voter turnout and more clearly advertise the consequences of this vote throughout the department
- Catherine also asked the SGPS if funding is available for our student society
 - it was confirmed that funding is not available for societies, but the SGPS can fund events
 - it was stated that we received some funding from the SGPS in the Fall (possibly for the Holiday Party) – Catherine will look into this

RTP Rep (Scott):

-No news to report

GC Rep (Grace):

-No news to report

Academic Reps (Cheryl and Kyle)

- Course evaluations are still being worked on
- Considering preparing a statement about course evaluations to be presented at the Faculty retreat (along with a statement about issues with courses based on results from Matt's earlier survey)
- Also considering, as a pilot study, attempting a student run survey of these courses at the end of the current semester

Secretary (Anneli):

- Will need to circulate constitutional amendments 10 days prior to vote
- Next meeting announcement will include invitation to those who would like to run in upcoming elections

Treasurer (Trina):

-No news to report

QUBS rep (Cory):

- The QUBS Executive Committee interviewed four top applicants for the Head Cook/Kitchen Manager position, and hired Veronicka Jaspers-Fayer for the position. Veronicka has previously worked at QUBS as a cook, and has opened and successfully operated restaurants, catering companies and a seafood store.

- There may be an increase in user-fees in the coming years to allow for an increase in the food and kitchen quality, among other things. This is just a possibility and nothing firm has been set.

- Lastly, a new high-efficiency washing machine has been installed in the lodge.

Social Reps (Ryan and Jeff)

-Curling night will be happening on April 1st at the Royal Kingston Curling Club

-Mojito party is planned for late April